

## Report - Internship in the Chofu City Hall

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From the end of February to mid-March, Tiago Pereira do Rego, Sthefany Ferreira Rosa dos Santos and me, all from the same Rio de Janeiro State University, enrolled in a internship in the Chofu Municipality, as part of the exchange program La-CEP. In this opportunity, we were able to learn a lot from the staff that assisted us, and the preparation for the task proposed - making presentations in a few *jidoukan* in the Chofu neighborhood - served as a great reflection of my identity as Brazilian. As a result of this effort, the children may have become at least a little more interested in Brazil, which is a great thing considering the events to happen soon in Japan. I believe there could be work to be done that would use more of our individual capabilities but, all the same, I understand the value of this kind of activity and am very happy with having participated on it. Both, participating in the presentation and expending the day with the children, as well as working as staff in the *Machikatsu Fesuta* was a wonderful experience that surely had a very good influence on me and will happen my career in education. It's success would not be possible without the support on many behind us, may that be helping us by checking the Japanese, taking us to the schools or instructing us.

In February 22nd, we had a meeting with the staff from the Chofu Municipality and, a little later, another meeting with the directors or the *jidoukan*. At first, not accompanied by our coordinator, I must admit I was scared of not understanding what was going on during the meeting, a feeling that, happily, didn't become truth. In the first meeting we were told what was expected from us to do, which was very well explained by Mr. Ide and Mr. Takeda, which led to the conversation with the principals, where we exposed what we planned doing and asking about their expectatives. It went smoothly and soon we had a clear view of the task ahead of us.

In preparation for the presentations, we had three meeting in the Chofu Municipality, in March 6th, 7th and 9th. At first, it seemed easy to make a presentation about Brazil but, later on I realized that it took a lot more of effort to present something I know so much, but at the time time, so little about. The first challenge was what should be included in our material. Things from daily life, for example, could sound interesting for us, but, from the point of

view of the Japanese children, could sound boring. Not only we had to make a presentation, but we needed to think it through, trying to see what kind of image would come across. We didn't want to make it only about *samba* and soccer. We wanted to show them the Brazil we knew, and I think we achieved it. After brainstorming for a while, we could come up with a concept for the content and how it should be visually presented. We put together some photos from our personal albums and photos ceded by friends, and from those, tried to explain Brazil. We tried to include a brief self presentation, some personal information and a little bit about the differences we saw between Japan and Brazil. The finished product, I believe, was a very versatile material, which could be used both for a ten minute introduction and a one hour class. The result as shown bellow:



As planned in the schedule, in March 14th, Tiago and Sthefany visited another *Jidoukan*, but, unfortunately, I was not able to go. As the releasing of the plans for the internship took a little longer than expected, one of the events conflicted with a trip I had scheduled with a friend. When the situation arose, I was rather preoccupied. Participating in the event was my responsibility, however, I could not plan far ahead without knowing the plans for the internship. At a certain point, I was ready to give up the travel, but the staff of Chofu Municipality was kind enough to understand the situation and try to make alternative plans for covering my absence. It was proposed that I participated taking photos of other

events. Their caring showed through this single gesture, and I am very grateful for it. I could enjoy the trip I planned to Kyoto, only because of how comprehensive they were.

In March 18th, we participated as staff in a event organized by the Chofu Municipality called *Machikatsu Fesuta*. The event happened close to the Keio Line Kokuryo Station, a place I didn't know yet, at the time. Each of us was assigned a different job in the event. Sthefany participated in the *Daruma* decoration tent; Tiago, in the Keio Line Stand and, I participated in the raffle and gifts tent. Inside the event there were a few tents that proposed the participants a quiz. By answering one, the person could receive a prize from the many available. By completing all the quizzes, though, in addition to this prize, the person could participate in the raffle to be held by the end of the event. Instructing people and talking to the other voluntaries in my tent was really fun. Also, by the beginning of the event, I was assigned to go to the streets and distribute pamphlets, inviting people to the event and, by this experience, I could see something I didn't realize until that time. In Brazil, it's easy to approach on someone and when they don't want to be approached, they use to be very vocal about it; In Japan, on the other hand, there's a subtlety that was very hard to catch at first. Some people would give me a snare look after receiving the pamphlet. A little later, when Mr. Ide came to check on me, I commented with him about it and, very kindly, he taught me the appropriate way to approach people on the streets in Japan. Not only the corporal language to do so, but the formal language that should be applied, and I am very grateful for his help. The *Machikatsu Fesuta* was, for sure, a fun experience, but also edifying in the sense that helped me see more of the Japanese society that I didn't see until that point.

From March 26th to March 29th, we visited *Somechi*, *Seibu*, and *Midorigaoka Jidoukan*. Each one of them was very special and the experience, also, very different. What all of them had in common how lively the children are and their interest in knowing us more. I got to play *onigokko* and *kendama* - both, things that I didn't know yet -, as well as soccer, baseball, color tag... After the preparation, the presentation came easily. Of course there were some problems but, by the end of it, I was very confident that we had done a good job. In some of them we were requested to make the *brigadeiro*, but I was really surprised with the staff from *Seibu*, that decided to make by themselves. It was delicious and made me remember of home.

The experience of being able to carry on such activity here in Japan was very satisfying and, even if I feeling afraid about my Japanese level in the beginning, but I got of

this experience more confident about it. Of course they could have done better use of our individual capabilities by having us translating material or doing anything related to foreigner environment, but I understand how necessary activities like that are necessary in the present Japanese scenario and I am glad to be a part of it. Presenting my country to the children may have had a impact on them, preparing them at least a little more to live in a more globalized world, but, nonetheless, it had a great impact on me. Having to think on how to present my home country made me really reflect about its actual state and how much from it do I actually know. The presentation, itself, was really fun and talking to the children was and amazing experience, even to get to know more about Japan. I only wish the actual plans for the internship would be released a little sooner so I could plan my trip accordingly and participate in all the events. However, I am very grateful for how comprehensive the staff from the Chofu Municipality was towards it. The *Machikatsu Fesuta* was a very interesting experience too, that I am happy to have participated.

By the end of this internship, I can only thanks everyone that gave us support for executing what was asked from us, be that helping us by checking the Japanese grammar, driving us to the *Jidoukan* or explaining us more about Japan. Both the Chofu Municipality and the La-CEP coordination, thank you for everything.



